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368 pages

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- 1 Conan Doyle's œuvre is articulated along three major literary axes and Hélène Machinal accordingly divides her study into three parts: crime fiction (1887-1898), fantasy fiction (1898-1912), and speculative fiction (1912-1930).
- 2 While mysterious deeds and strange events tend to be rationally accounted for in the early Sherlock Holmes stories, the essentially fantastic components of the later fiction are already in place. In fact, Hélène Machinal explains, science no longer holds the key to unlocking the human mind in Conan Doyle's second writing phase. Instead, unfathomable forces rule in a world of overwhelming fear and uncontrollable angst. Announcing the third part of Doyle's life and career, *The Lost World* introduces Professor Challenger as well as a rising genre known as speculative fiction or futuristic novel, in which the uncanny is no longer depicted as a fatality but as the goal of an active quest.
- 3 Hélène Machinal shows how these three literary movements reflect the inquiring mind of a writer in constant dialogue with a fast-moving era. Driven by fascination and anguish, Conan Doyle takes part in, and makes sense of the political, scientific and intellectual progress of his time (1859-1930).

- 4 The quest into the unknown characterizes both Conan Doyle's literature and Hélène Machinal's research. In exploring every nook and cranny of Doyle's oeuvre, "from Sherlock Holmes to Professor Challenger", Hélène Machinal sheds light on the lesser-known periods, publications, characteristics and characters of the Scottish writer. She stresses that Doyle not only laid the (still-standing) foundations of the detective short-story but also incorporated and developed in his works the great literary and ideological debates of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
 - 5 Analyzing the fiction of the author in its entirety enables Hélène Machinal to present his life and career as an ongoing philosophical reflection leading to his engagement with spiritualism in 1916.
 - 6 Hélène Machinal emphasizes the global coherence and vision of a prolific writer whose work has been unfairly pinned down to a literally episodic –albeit symbolic– character and genre. It is here restored to its incredible richness and variety, depth and complexity.
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AUTHORS

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